

Who should get a Flu vaccine?

The answer is simple: EVERY ONE---EVERY YEAR. The new recommendation from the CDC is that everyone should get a flu vaccine every year. Every year 200,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized and 36,000 die from flu and its complications. Some who die are otherwise healthy and some who die are children.

Some people are at a higher risk of becoming seriously ill or dying from the flu. It is even more important that people in the following groups get a flu vaccine every year. The CDC states that the following people are at a higher risk of serious problems from the flu:

People at High Risk for Developing Flu-Related Complications:

- Children younger than 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old.
- Adults 65 years of age and older.
- Last year American Indians and Alaskan Natives seemed to be at higher risk for flu complications.

People who have medical conditions including:

- Asthma
- Neurological and neurodevelopmental conditions [including disorders of the brain, spinal cord, peripheral nerve, and muscle such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy (seizure disorders), stroke, intellectual disability (mental retardation), moderate to severe developmental delay, muscular dystrophy, or spinal cord injury].
- Chronic lung disease (such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease [COPD] and cystic fibrosis).
- Heart disease (such as congenital heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease).
- Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease).
- Endocrine disorders (such as diabetes mellitus).
- Kidney disorders.
- Liver disorders.
- Metabolic disorders (such as inherited metabolic disorders and mitochondrial disorders).
- Weakened immune system due to disease or medication (such as people with HIV or AIDS, or cancer, or those on chronic steroids).
- People younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.
- People who are morbidly obese (Body Mass Index, or BMI, of 30 or greater).

Who should not get a Flu Vaccine?

There are some people who should not get a flu vaccine without first consulting a physician. These include:

- People who have a severe allergy to chicken eggs.
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination.
- People who developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine.
- Children less than 6 months of age (influenza vaccine is not approved for use in this age group), and
- People who have a moderate-to-severe illness with a fever (they should wait until they recover to get vaccinated).